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LIFESTYLE COLUMNISTS

Plan your home renovation at your library

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If you want to see neglected and worn-out houses revived, just tune into one of the many popular television shows such as "Flip or Flop," "First Time Flippers" or "Fixer Upper."

If you want to try your hand at the process, however, your Abilene Public Library highly recommends that you stop by and check out some of our informative books on the process first.

More than one first-time flipper has stated that they decided to try their hand at flipping because the shows made it look easy. Nothing could be further from the truth. As someone who has installed kitchen cabinets, grouted tile and hung drywall, I can tell you that what these shows depict is just a fraction of the planning and hard work involved in renovating a home.

A good first step is to check out "The Smart Approach to Home Renovation" by Susan B. Hillstrom. She takes would-be remodelers through the process, from planning and budgeting to completion. In addition to before-and-after photos, Hillstrom includes stories from homeowners, who share their own makeover experiences.

TV stars Drew and Jonathan Scott provide advice on selecting a potential property, discuss budgeting and offer tips in "Dream Home: The Property Brothers' Ultimate Guide to Finding & Fixing Your

Perfect House." This resource stays true to the vibe of the show while still being comprehensive.

"Framing Floors, Walls & Ceilings," by the editors of Fine Homebuilding, is an unabashedly thorough collection of the most authoritative and current advice on the topic. If reading through this doesn't make you think twice about doing your own framing, you will find it a comprehensive guide to use during your project.

With plenty of clear visuals, "Black & Decker Advanced Home Wiring" shows homeowners already comfortable with wiring projects how to tackle more advanced projects. It also points out the accompanying code requirements.

Experts say that renovating certain rooms can bring the most return for your investment. The kitchen is one such room. The Better Homes and Gardens book "Kitchens: Stunning Spaces on a Shoestring Budget" covers everything from cabinets to storage. It also shows what type of makeovers can be achieved based on budgets of \$1,000, \$2,500 and \$5,000.

Another key room in house renovation is the bathroom. "Norma Vally's Bathroom Fix-ups: More Than 50 Projects for Every Skill Level" gives insight into what projects can be tackled realistically and which are best left to a trained professional.

If done correctly, home renovations can increase your property's value. They also can be a nightmare of unexpected issues and expenses.

Whether you plan to gut a home or spruce it up, your Abilene Public Library has many titles available to help you plan intelligently and prepare for an undertaking that can be both rewarding and exhausting.

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